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ON

THE PRESENT CONDITION

OF THE

L A B O U R I N G P O O R

IN

MANCHESTER;

WITH

HINTS FOR IMPROVING IT.

BY THE

REV. RICHARD PARKINSON, B. D.,

*Canon of Manchester.*

THE POOR SHALL NEVER CEASE OUT OF THE LAND.

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\* \* \* Masters are meeting this question in a right spirit. At the request of some of them, an edition of this pamphlet as cheap as could be afforded is now printed, in order that they may distribute it among their workmen. Good *must* arise from the free and calm discussion of any question, which has the mutual benefit of different classes of men for its honest object.

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TO THE  
CHURCHWARDENS AND SIDESMEN  
OF  
MANCHESTER.

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GENTLEMEN,

There is no public body to whom any work treating on the condition of the labouring poor of Manchester can be so appropriately addressed, as to yourselves. Constituted, by a law so ancient that “the memory of man,” or the record of history, “runneth not to the contrary,” the parochial guardians of the poor, you have yourselves, while in office, like your predecessors from time immemorial, exhibited to the world a striking instance of the elasticity and vital energies of our free institutions, by practically demonstrating, that an office, originally designed but for the parochial government of a small hamlet, was equally adapted to the exigencies of the most populous cities ; and by affording, (as the system which you have pursued in this place has confessedly done,) a model for all the latest legislative changes in the modes of administering parochial relief. You may regret that the administra-

tion of bounty, which in its original design at least, was presumed to flow from the principles of Christian charity, has been transferred from the hands of ecclesiastical almoners to the distribution of the civil officer ; or rather, you will lament that the Christian feeling, which first prompted the institution, should have so far evaporated, as to have led the appropriate connection between the Churchwarden's office and the relief of the poor to be lost sight of, and forgotten ; but I am sure you will rejoice, with myself, should the change which has now taken place be found to be for the benefit of the distressed recipients of parish bounty ; and, having yourselves so efficiently directed the administration of the old law, will lend all the assistance in your power to give effect to the administration of the new. I dedicate this little work to you, not only as a mark of private respect, but as a public testimony to the gratifying fact, that your arduous duties have always been discharged to your own great credit, and to the mutual satisfaction both of giver and receiver.

I have the honour to be,

GENTLEMEN,

Your very faithful Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

*Broughton, Jan. 12th, 1841.*

## ON THE PRESENT CONDITION,

&c.

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EVERY body, who has tried, knows what a difficult thing it is to do good. Nothing, indeed, seems so simple in theory; nothing is found more perplexing in practice: and it is hardly exaggeration to say, that half the misery in the world arises from misdirected attempts to relieve it. One would suppose that there are no two classes of men in existence who are bound together by a more amiable and enduring tie, than those of giver and receiver; yet there are no two classes, (with gratifying exceptions, it is true), who entertain, and that on plausible grounds, harder thoughts of each other. The giver complains of ingratitude, of imposture; that the truth is never to be learnt; that want never teaches prudence; that it is impossible to help those who will not help themselves. The receiver complains that what is given is not at the right moment, or to the proper amount; that the impostor is relieved, while the deserving is sent empty away; that loud-tongued importunity thrives and succeeds, while patient and uncomplaining merit is suffered to pine in unrelieved and unpitied want; and that the giver often takes out in pride and ostentation at least a full interest for the amount of his benefactions. There is, doubtless, much truth in both these classes of complaints; truth enough to sharpen recrimination and perpetuate acrimonious feelings in a case like this, where the faults are,—as they are generally found to be,—about equally divided between the two contending parties. The great cause of this erroneous

estimate of each other's characters; of want of judgment and discretion in givers, on the one side, and on the other, of imposition, hypocrisy, and consequent dissatisfaction; may be expressed in almost a single word—IGNORANCE OF EACH OTHER. This is the real secret of all their mutual distrust. This is the primary obstacle in the way of reconciliation between those whom God and nature meant to be friends, equally dependant upon, and equally beneficial to each other. Remove this, and you at once clear away the superincumbent earth which covers the golden ore, and the whole precious mine lies open before you. To overcome any difficulty, the first step is to ascertain exactly where it lies; and, in this case, there cannot exist two opinions as to the main source of difference and distrust between the giver and receiver; it is IGNORANCE OF EACH OTHER.

He who can remove this ignorance, or can even indicate the right course by which it may ultimately be removed, will indeed be a benefactor to mankind! To attempt it—to open the question—to suggest the discussion of it *in a right temper*—cannot but be considered as a laudable object, however feeble may be the result. I am too well aware how difficult it is to approach a great question like this; involving, at least incidentally, political and religious principles, and touching upon one of the tenderest points of our nature, viz.,—the duties attached to *station*, whether that station be high or low—without more or less giving offence. Indeed such questions are too often discussed for the very *purpose* of doing so; that is, the writer either goes upon the false principle of shaming one party into its duty by contrasting it with the opposite, or he calculates upon being more than recompensed by popularity with one side for any hostility which he may excite by his attacks upon the other; or lastly, and which is the most common error, the writer may be so mixed up, by station, or by the habitual direction of his thoughts and studies, with one side of the question, as to be incapable of appreciating the character and motives of those whom he opposes, or of seeing the obvious errors of

those whom he defends. Whatever mistakes the present writer may commit, at least he cannot plead any of the above mentioned grounds of defence—if grounds of defence they can be called; nor is he conscious to himself of being subject to any such disqualifying influences. By station removed from the ordinary motives which bias men in their views of questions in which station necessarily holds a prominent place;—by profession bound to treat all men alike—as being, religiously considered, all members of one family, the Head of which is Christ;—in his spiritual capacity called upon equally to visit and advise with rich and poor, high and low, learned and unlearned, and thus equally and intimately acquainted with the opinions and prejudices, the characteristic virtues and vices of them all—such a one would seem qualified beyond most men, at least as far as other than *personal* qualifications are concerned, to enter calmly and without bias or prejudice on this great question; and, (I am ready to confess,) in the same degree inexcusable, should he deviate, either in thought or language, from the line of discussion which reason and duty seem so clearly to mark out for him.

IGNORANCE OF EACH OTHER. This is the text. Most men will at once allow it to be in a *great measure* true, and to be *one* great impediment in the way of relieving want and distress; but few men who have not given their minds distinctly to the consideration of the subject, are fully aware of how *profound* is this ignorance in this great town. The rich, as a class, know nothing of *each other*; the poor, as a class, know nothing of *each other*; and no wonder then, that the rich should be *at least* as ignorant of the poor, and the poor of the rich, as they are respectively of the class to which they belong. I have said that the rich are profoundly ignorant of each other; and no one who has not had an opportunity of mixing pretty generally in society can be fully aware of the degree in which his ignorance prevails. The first ground of this, is the extent to which our population has spread. Habits of general intercourse have become impossible among

a community so numerous and scattered as ours, and so men are driven necessarily to confine that intercourse to those connected with them by the ties of relationship, similarity of taste and occupation, or the contiguity of neighbourhood. This is one obvious cause of separation between men of like station in life, which leads to ignorance of each other's views and habits, and a consequent want of interest in each other's proceedings. But there are others which lead not only to separation, but opposition. Men are bound down to this place almost exclusively by the tie of business : but business leads to seclusion from general matters, to ignorance of those pursuing another branch of trade—to rivalry or opposition with regard to those engaged in our own. Then there are the differences of religion, which split men into sects ; and the differences of politics, which divide them into parties. From these, and similar causes, it arises that, taken as a community, there is probably no town in the world where men know so little of each other, or where it is so difficult to arrive at an accurate knowledge of what is the *prevalent* feeling on any question, as in Manchester. Men constantly breathe one atmosphere with those of similar tastes and opinions with themselves ; they hear repeated the echo of their own voices till they fancy them to be those of the public at large ; and then are filled with surprise when some great crisis, either commercial or political, arrives, to find how profoundly ignorant they had all along been of that which seemed to them to be as clear as daylight. This ignorance of each other's views and habits, which would be almost ludicrous were it not for its melancholy effects, may be well illustrated by reference to a single point in which such ignorance, in a place like this, might be least expected, namely—the state of trade at any given period. The extreme of distress, indeed, or the extreme of prosperity, nobody *can* mistake ; and on these all are soon agreed ; but it is the most difficult thing in the world to ascertain the truth with regard to any state of *transition*, or as to whether that transition is upwards or downwards. You



meet a merchant, or manufacturer, of the highest character, and engaged in the most extensive transactions, and enquire anxiously into the state of the market;—"There is a better *feeling*," is probably the reply. You meet another, of equal standing, but belonging to another *set*, or engaged in another branch of trade, and his answer is—"Worse than ever!" You encounter a third, who thinks matters are "much the same;" while a fourth is sure we are all on the brink of ruin, because a certain out-landish mail has not yet arrived! Now all these are men of the highest intelligence, of the greatest experience, and, in their own line of commercial transactions, to be altogether relied upon for their sagacity and foresight; but—they are IGNORANT OF EACH OTHER. Even if they have mutual dealings in the way of commerce, they have little unreserved communication on general matters; their very minds might seem to be constructed on different principles. Each has his theory in trade, in politics, in religion; and each, drawing a general conclusion as to his ability from his undeniable success in his own particular department, probably feels, if he would confess so much, that, give him his own way, and he could reform and govern the world!

I have mentioned the ignorance of the *poor*, with regard to each other. It may seem to some that this is an immaterial question, when the subject under discussion is the best mode of discovering and relieving the *distresses* of the poor. But whosoever draws this conclusion betrays an utter ignorance of human nature, and the actual condition and conduct of the poorer classes. *The poor give more to each other than the rich give to the poor.* I am confirmed in this assertion by the testimony of one of our oldest, most learned, and most observant physicians, whose humanity is as conspicuous as his learning and talent,\* and who has often publicly declared that the experience of nearly fifty years has convinced him that the aggregate sum given in each year by the poor to each other

\* Dr. Bardsley.

exceeds that contributed by the rich in the same period. Nor is this surprising. The poor man naturally flees, in the first instance, for assistance to those nearest to him, best known to him, and the most likely, from feelings of sympathy, to relieve his at the moment small, but pressing necessity. Of course, those nearest and best known to him are naturally persons in a somewhat similar condition of life with himself; and a fellow-feeling, together with a painful foreboding that such a state of destitution may soon become their own, causes such appeals to be at once listened to, according to the means, and often even beyond the means of the givers. Hence a knowledge of each other, among the poor, is absolutely necessary to prevent them from being constantly imposed upon by others very little poorer, and much less honest, than themselves. I believe that imposture thrives *especially* amongst the poor. They are much less able to detect it, and less suspicious of its existence, than the rich. Hence it is that ignorance of each other is the cause, not only that they often bestow a portion of their own scanty pittance upon those who are totally unworthy of it, but that they cherish in their own bosoms a nest of idle or vicious outcasts, who prey upon their very vitals, and find a refuge among them, through their mistaken humanity, from the salutary control of public opinion—nay, often from the hands of public justice.

Now if ignorance of each other as regards the poor be in itself a serious obstacle to their judicious relief of one another, where does that ignorance exist to so enormous an extent as in this town? In most places, even in most large towns of some antiquity, there *is* such a thing as *neighbourhood*, for the poor as well as the rich; that is, there is an acquaintance with each other arising from having been born or brought up in the same street; having worked for the same master; attended the same place of worship; or even from having seen the same face, now grown “old and familiar,” though the name and even occupation of the individual might be altogether unknown, passing one’s door, at wonted hours, from work to meal and

from meal to work, with a punctuality which implied regular and steady habits, and was of itself a sufficient testimony to character. Again, most other towns have been young before they became old,—were villages before they became cities; had a time of infancy, with all the parts and limbs in little of that manhood to which they have at last arrived; and their growing and expanding was but the setting of those bones and the strengthening of those sinews which existed in all their symmetry, though not in all their strength and compactness, in the earlier stages of the advancing commonwealth. But no such account can be given of the rise and progress of the vast community among which we live. We have not *grown*, but accumulated; we are not stratified, we are but a conglomerate. We are but, as it were, the *debris* which the vast whirlpool of human affairs has deposited here in one of its eddies, associated but not united, contiguous but not connected. Hence, therefore, irregularities and anomalies, which in other circumstances would be intolerable, are with us naturally to be expected, and are the direct consequence of our peculiar condition. The wonder is, not so much that such anomalies exist, but that, constituted as we are, we have so soon adopted the regular and constitutional courses of older and better ordered communities, and have by a voluntary and unconcerted movement, and as it were by a natural instinct, fallen at once into those habits of regularity and order which, in other places, it has often taken ages of discipline and experiment to arrive at!

Still, to return to the point, the poor have, in this place, *special* grounds for being ignorant of each other; and on that account labour under peculiar difficulties, both in obtaining and communicating relief. They have neither a common origin, nor a common object. Gathered, not only from every part of our own vast empire, but from every portion of the habitable globe; of all creeds, occupations, and habits; and with no common object but that of obtaining, it may be at each other's expense, a mean and precarious subsistence, they

have no tie of communion and fellowship with each other, beyond the accidental circumstance of locality, or a participation in the same trials and privations. Hence are they too often mutually deceiving and deceived. The value of a good character is seriously impaired, where a knowledge of character is next to impossible; and the poor, from this very ignorance of each other, can neither judiciously relieve want themselves, nor effectually recommend the relief of it to others.

I have so far dwelt—I trust at not greater length than was necessary—on two important questions,—the ignorance of the rich with regard to the rich, and of the poor with regard to the poor; both being serious hinderances in the way of effectually and judiciously relieving cases of want and distress. But the main point remains to be discussed, and which follows with irresistible force from what has been already said; so much so, as only to require stating to be at once assented to; namely, the still deeper ignorance of these two great divisions of our population with regard *to each other*. If men, who are naturally associated by similarity of condition and common objects are yet found to be, in towns like these, very little connected or acquainted with each other, it cannot be expected that those whose station, means, and pursuits are altogether different, should know, or even seek to know, what is the position of those with whom there is so little to bring them into necessary contact. Hence it is that—startling as the expression may seem to those at a distance, who look upon Manchester generally as a totally democratic community—a sort of revolutionized America;—hence it is, that there is no town in the world where the distance between the rich and poor is so great, or the barrier between them so difficult to be crossed. I once ventured to designate the town of Manchester as the most *aristocratic* town in England; and, in the sense in which the term was used, the expression is not hyperbolic. The separation between the different classes, and the consequent ignorance of each other's habits and con-

dition, are far more complete in this place than in any country of the older nations of Europe, or the agricultural portions of our own kingdom.\* There is far less *personal* communication between the master cotton-spinner and his workmen, between the calico-printer and his blue-handed boys, between the master tailor and his apprentices, than there is between the Duke of Wellington and the humblest labourer on his estate, or than there *was* between good old George the Third and the meanest errand-boy about his palace. I mention not this as a matter of blame, I state it simply as a *fact*; a fact which may, perhaps, easily be accounted for from the peculiar circumstances in which we are placed, but which is of the utmost importance to our present inquiry, the object of which is to show that the great impediment in the way of any judicious and effectual relief of the poor is our ignorance of each other. This ignorance, on the part of the giving class, is indeed *the one* great difficulty which we have to surmount, before justice can ever be done to either one class or the other; either to the rich or the poor. It affects alike the amount and the usefulness both of our private alms and our public subscriptions. And perhaps the extent of this ignorance, and the evil effects which arise from it, cannot be better illustrated, than by referring, by way of example, to the position in which we constantly find ourselves when one of our periodical visitations of bad times, and consequent distress among our labour-

\* But the other day, a poor woman walked all the way from Stockport, in the hope of getting some relief from me, on the simple ground of her knowing my connection with the agricultural parish where she had been brought up, and which she had left, with her husband and large family, in the hopes of higher wages, and some employment for her younger children. I naturally inquired whether she did not regret having left a place where, though she might not get such high wages, she was sure of relief in her distress from those who had known her all her life? Her answer was:—“Mr. Wilkinson (the clergyman) strongly recommended us to stay, and I wish we had taken his advice; for there was not a house in that parish where I could not have had a meal for asking for, both for me and my children; and now, in yonder large town, if I ask for anything, every body takes me for a thief!” She spoke the language of thousands of the honest poor in similar circumstances.

ing poor, happens to overtake us: I have already dwelt at some length on the ignorance which exists among the wealthier classes of this town, with regard to each other's views and pursuits, and the differences of opinion, commercial, political, and religious, which separate them so effectually from each other. But there is one occasion,—and I am proud to record it,—on which all these grounds of difference are at once forgotten; when religious opinions, party prejudices, and commercial rivalries are scattered to the winds, and one universal and harmonious lull of concord pervades the turbulent elements of strife and discord, which in ordinary times are daily raging around us. That occasion is, when some general calamity, such as pestilence or want, befalls the vast masses of the labouring population which we have gathered round us, and a call is made, from some competent authority, and on just and proper grounds, to contribute towards their relief. Then it is that all these hostile agencies are at once spell-bound; and the only contention is, who can most abundantly contribute towards, or who can suggest the most judicious and effectual means of alleviating the wants and sufferings of our fellow-townsmen. A public meeting is called; and our merchants and manufacturers eagerly assemble, with their hearts full of charitable feeling, and their hands wide open to relieve the pressing distress. But *then* appears, in a form which, as I before said, would be ludicrous were it not melancholy, our utter ignorance of each other, and of the actual condition of the poor,—to such an extent as seriously to impede the operations of charity, and sometimes even to frustrate them altogether. Every one knows and feels that there *is* the utmost distress; but *why* it exists; or to *what extent* it exists; or *where* it particularly presses—no one can tell! One individual, by way of hazarding a *fact*, asserts, on his own knowledge, that the whole class of hand-loom weavers are out of work;—he is immediately responded to by a master in that department, who declares that all *his* men are in full work, and at full wages! This goes on, through the other departments of

trade, with the same contradictory results ;—the confusion gets worse confounded—the hour of one begins to thin the meeting, as it will thin *any* meeting, even one of charity, in Manchester—and at last, some matter-of-fact individual, in order to proceed to *business*, rises to move that a committee be formed to inquire whether there *be* any distress or not! A committee is at once constituted, consisting, by way of securing unanimity, of the most heterogeneous materials that can be collected on the spot, who retire and report, not from any new *facts* to which they can possibly have access, but from the *impressions* which the majority or some influential members of the committee may happen to entertain, that there *is* a case of general distress, or there is *not*, as it may happen to be! This, it will be allowed, is not an altogether unfair picture of what generally occurs on such occasions; arising entirely from the one great cause which impedes all our motions in the way either of relieving want or repressing crime—ignorance of each other's precise condition and circumstances.

If the reader has been so far convinced by the previous statements, as to assent to the propositions, that the ignorance above alleged does in truth exist, and that it forms the main obstacle in the way of accurately distinguishing real cases of distress, and proper objects of relief, from those which are neither the one nor the other, he will at once anticipate the remedy,—that *information* will cure what *ignorance* has caused,—and that all that is wanted, is a more intimate acquaintance, and a more frequent and familiar intercourse with each other, between the class of givers and the class of receivers, in order to protect the one from imposition, and to secure for the just claims of the other a ready and liberal attention. Now it is remarkable—I would rather say, it is Providential—that the more artificial a state of society becomes, and the more men are congregated in large masses, the more are they thrown necessarily into personal contact, and the more are they daily reminded, if they would listen,

not only to the voice of religion and nature, but even that of circumstances, of their mutual dependence upon each other, not simply for subsistence, but for happiness and enjoyment. The tie of master and workman, of employer and employed, of the payer and the receiver of wages, is getting closer and more important with every onward movement of society; and in large towns like these, the welfare of the whole community, the peace and happiness of rich and poor alike, will soon be found to be almost entirely dependent upon the way in which these two classes discharge their several duties towards each other. Let it become a rule—not merely a circumstance of *frequent* occurrence, and a point *generally* aimed at,—as I am happy to believe it is with many masters—but a RULE, not to be deviated from, that the master, or some confidential servant of equal education and influence with the master himself, shall become *personally* acquainted with every workman in his employ; and no case of real distress would, hereafter, go unrelieved, from the ignorance of the giver, and the inability of the receiver to produce satisfactory testimony to the necessity of his case. No doubt, difficulties at once present themselves, as they always do when duty calls to improvement, which soon vanish before a serious and earnest attempt to reduce what is *really* a duty, to a practical application. Two simple rules alone seem necessary for this purpose. One is, that every master keep a book, in which is always entered the name and residence of each workman, the number of his children, the amount of his wages, the time of his entering, and the time of his quitting such master's service, with the reason for the latter. The other rule is, that each master either pay his workmen himself, or if that be impracticable, that he be as frequently as possible present at the time of payment, by which means he will gradually become acquainted with their persons and circumstances, and they with him. It is astonishing how much men are conciliated towards one another simply by becoming personally acquainted. It is human nature, (though not an amiable part of it), to think



ill of those we do not know, especially when our interests seem to be opposed to one another; but personal acquaintance, when there is a disposition to conciliate, will of itself soften asperities, even if it do not generate esteem. If masters fully understood the influence which even the slightest personal attention produces on the minds of their workmen, they would be more lavish than they are of a simple act of justice which can cost them so little, and would profit them so much. Treat a man *like* a friend, and you soon make him one; treat him like a rogue, and *his* honesty must be much greater than *your* wisdom, if he do not soon justify your suspicions! In no way are men so easily led—often, it is true, so blindly led—as through the affections. Thanks to the benign arrangements of a merciful Father, the affections are the only part of our nature the cultivation of which man *cannot* neglect, however much he may often pervert them. Every man comes into the world surrounded by objects of affection. The filial and parental tie is one which binds rich and poor alike; and is often the stronger in the poor, because it is almost the only domestic blessing which they can truly call their own. Hence it is, that men who are quite inaccessible to reason, are easily led by the affections; and no wise man will neglect to use, especially when it is for the mutual benefit of all, this powerful and universally-prevailing instrument. The next stage to the tie of parent and child, in the progress of society, is that of master and servant; and it is for the interest of both to carry into their relations with each other as much as possible of the kindly feeling which has been nursed in the bosom, in childhood, by the domestic fireside. We speak of Chartism and Socialism as evils incident to our present state of society; and so they are, but by no means necessarily so. They arise, in a great measure, from the ignorance which at present exists among the poor with regard to the condition, conduct, habits, and enjoyments of the rich; and from the erroneous but natural conclusion which springs up, even in thoughtful minds, out of that ignorance—namely, that poverty is substantially

and altogether an evil, and riches of themselves a good. If they knew the rich more intimately, they would soon be undeceived with regard to this radical error. They would see that happiness or misery depends upon a thousand causes besides wealth or poverty—nay, that the very *reverse* of what they *suppose*, is often the true state of the case; wealth being frequently, even humanly speaking, and with regard to material happiness and enjoyment, a positive evil, and poverty a real blessing. We speak of Chartism or Socialism as if it were *one* thing—*one* class of opinions—*one* ground of discontent; whereas, in reality, nothing is more heterogeneous or more undefined, than that which we thus foolishly attempt to designate under a single word. It is, in truth, but discontent, springing out of real or fancied wrong, either from individuals or from society at large—that discontent arising from as many causes, and taking almost as many shapes, as there are discontented minds in the world. It is true, indeed, that a powerful and designing intellect may sometimes condense all these various grounds of dissatisfaction into one focus, and give an appearance of one united body to that which, in reality, has as many heads as the hydra; but discuss these questions with each individual apart from the rest, and you will soon find the real ground of his discontent to lie in some personal grievance; and often founded upon some fact which is, in truth, no fact at all, and which half a dozen words from any respected superior would remove at once and for ever. This is *one* of the good ends which will be at once answered by a more familiar intercourse between master and man—casual explanations will take place of what to an ignorant man may be a serious difficulty, though the solution be very obvious to one who is better informed; and, at all events, a kindlier feeling will be generated between the parties, by an exhibition of mutual good will, and by a conviction arising from it, which always tends much to soften the asperities of difference of opinion—namely, that “something may be said on both sides.” It cannot be doubted that if master and man were in the habit of communicating

more freely with each other, we should cease to hear so frequently as we do of those horrible outbursts of personal violence and outrage, which trades unions, and other combinations, are now enabled to nurse to maturity in fatal secrecy and silence; and which shew in so striking a light the complete estrangement of feeling, and total want of free communication that exists between master and workman. If there were not *personal* dislike, as well as supposed opposing interests, to set one class of workmen against another, or man against master, surely there would mostly be found some Lord Mounteagle, with the common feelings of humanity, to reveal the Plot—some remorse of conscience to whisper the meditated destruction! Who ever heard of a trades union among domestic servants?

The main effect, however, as far as our present subject is concerned, which would arise out of this frequent intercourse with, and personal knowledge of each other, between the employer and employed, is the benefit which would accrue to both parties, in case of individual or general distress among the latter. Then would both feel the infinite advantage of this their mutual acquaintance. The giver would be no longer imposed upon; the receiver would be no longer neglected, for want of testimony to his deserving character. It is true that, in towns like these, there will always, especially in severe seasons, be a vast amount of population whose distresses are real, and loudly call for relief, who yet cannot, from various causes, produce such proof of their desert as a jealous scrutiny into past character may require. There will still remain, moreover, a large class who have no assignable occupation except that of extorting a precarious and not very creditable subsistence from the ignorance, thoughtlessness, or necessities of others,—those wild beasts of prey, which always infest the uncultivated wastes of humanity, and prowl about the outskirts of civilization. Such must, of necessity, be left to the salutary operation of our present system—the Workhouse—the Night Asylum—and the Police. These institutions are indeed invalu-

able, as far as they go, and when applied to their legitimate and very limited purposes; but the great misfortune has been, that, (with the exception of the Provident Society and the Bank for Savings, both much confined in their operations), they are the *only* public institutions which have yet been devised for the purpose of improving the condition of the poor. Now these are, in their very nature, *preventive* and not *remedial*; they do not even profess to diffuse good, but simply to check evil. They are devoted to the extremities of society,—leaving untouched its vital parts. They seem but public confessions that our body politic is inevitably bleeding to death of some immedicable wound, and that all we can do is to provide ourselves with these large receptacles, to prevent the overflow from deluging the whole country around us!

I have hitherto urged the necessity of a more frequent personal communication between the employer and the employed, on the ground of the mutual benefit which both parties will derive from it; but the latter class are, if possible, more deeply interested in it than the former, for a benefit, equally shared between two parties, is of far greater value to him who already has few, than to him who has many. I would especially urge upon the working classes to learn to regard this intercourse as a *right*, instead of shrinking from it, as they too frequently do, as an evil or an intrusion. The industrious poor have all to gain, and nothing to lose by it; and I am surprised that among all the champions which have successively put themselves forward as the defenders of the rights of the poor, none of them ever thought of *this*. If advantages *do* arise from communication between wealth and poverty, knowledge and ignorance, civilized habits and the want of them, then it is the interest of the former class to seek earnestly for such communication; nay, to insist upon it as part of the mutual contract, if not expressed at least morally implied, when they entered into *partnership* with their employers. I call the relation between employer and workman a *partnership*, for it is a great mistake to suppose that the latter brings

no capital into the concern, and can, therefore, hardly be considered in the light of a partner; for independent of that most curiously constructed and most productive of all pieces of machinery—the *human arm*—he embarks in his master's service what to himself (and to his country too) is the most valuable of all possessions, even in a pecuniary sense—*his character*. Now this character is of the nature of a moral Insurance. Its value increases with every year that he maintains it unspotted, and upon it he hopes to draw for respectability and often for support, in sickness or old age. But his master holds, if I may carry on the figure, the Policy of this moral Insurance, of which every year's faithful service adds to the value; and the servant has a *right* to expect, that whenever he may require the assistance of this character, his master shall be prepared to do full justice to it, and thus repay him a portion of those wages which may justly be said to have been fairly earned in his service. But no master *can* do this, without personal knowledge—books carefully kept, which may speak when the master is dead or absent—and a much more frequent intercourse with those under his employ, than, as a general rule, exists at present. Let then, the honest and industrious servant so far insist on his just and inalienable *rights*, 'as that the master shall, in all cases, be enabled to do justice to his character, and testify to the uprightness and integrity of his conduct; and let the master, at the same time, see his interest as well as his duty, in fully informing himself with regard to every circumstance of his servant's character and conduct, and in contributing, by every means in his power, to the happiness and prosperity of his *junior partner*, rather than his stipendary labourer.

I have, in this discussion, intentionally confined myself to one subject—the pecuniary relief of the deserving poor. I have also omitted all religious considerations, because I would appeal to principles which are seated in our common humanity, and because the question has been, not the duties *in general* of the rich and poor to each other, but whether the line of

conduct here recommended, *be* a duty. If so, then do the obligations of Christian obedience second and enforce the conclusions of moral statistics with ten-fold force. Then does what is expedient become *right*—then does the fulfilment of these reciprocal obligations become a *Christian grace*,—then does the neglect of them become a *sin*. But I will not now enter upon this wide field—a field for a volume; but, returning to the question of *moral statistics*, and considering the CLERGY, as, from their alliance with the state, they have sometimes been considered, (though with a very low and inadequate view of their sacred functions), a sort of *moral police*—I cannot but remark how fatally their operations in this capacity are retarded and crippled, by the present deplorable ignorance of the masters with regard to the state, circumstances, and opinions of their workmen. There is no body of clergy in the kingdom—and I speak from a somewhat extensive knowledge of them—who are more exemplary in the discharge of that most irksome part of their ministerial duty, the visitation of the poor, than the parochial clergy of Manchester; yet they are impeded in their labours, at every step, by the ignorance of those who ought to be their best assistants in the discharge of this duty, and for whose temporal interests this vast and unnatural accumulation of human beings is brought together, and thrown upon *their* spiritual care. Were these as well informed as they ought to be, the clergyman's task would be infinitely lightened. He would then have simply to procure from the masters in his ecclesiastical district a list of the men under their employ, with an outline of their general character and conduct, and he would have at once, as it were, a *moral map* of his district, which would only require filling up, or correcting, at his own convenience. Instead of this, he has, in all cases, to construct such a map for himself; to explore each region from door to door, as if it had been yet an undiscovered and uncivilized country; and to encounter all those rebuffs, disappointments, and hostilities, which nothing but the highest sense of religious obligation can struggle against, and which nothing is wanted to

remove, but an honest discharge of those duties between master and workman, which we have shewn to be not less a law of interest and humanity than of the word of God. Of all sufferers by the breach of this rule, the clergy are the greatest.\*

But I hasten, and it is perhaps more than time, to conclude. And I do so with the earnest wish and prayer, that all classes may entertain these hasty suggestions in the spirit with which they are written; and that the fruit of them may be some nearer approach than exists at present to a state of greater mutual amity, and more intimate communication. For I am firmly persuaded, both from reason and experience, that if one great lesson of wisdom, in individuals, be "know thyself," in communities it is, "know one another."

\* My object, as above stated, has been simply to enforce and illustrate a *general principle*, feeling assured, that if that is once firmly established, minor details, and practical hints of improvement, will soon follow. As an instance of the latter, I would beg to refer to a little tract by Mr. Robertson, surgeon, entitled, "On a proposal to withhold out-door relief from widows with families;" which, whether the reader agrees with the writer or not, he will certainly confess to be written with a full knowledge of facts, and in a most kindly and Christian spirit.

THE END.



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